| Sl. No. | Circle | Panchayat Villages provided with telecom facility |
|---|---|---|
| 18. | Punjab | 11975 |
| 19. | Rajasthan | 8673 |
| 20. | Tamil Nadu | 13126 |
| 21. | Uttar Pradesh (East) | 51262 |
| 22. | Uttar Pradesh (West) | 12858 |
| 23. | Uttaranchal | 5929 |
| 24. | West Bengal | 3473 |
| | Total | 228279 |

**Competition between BSNL and private mobile operators**

1472. SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that more then 50 lakh BSNL and MTNL landline phones have been surrendered and disconnected by the people in India during 2002-03 in view of the growing demand for mobile phones;

(b) whether it is a fact that there is a tough competition between BSNL and private mobile operators in the mobile phone sector; and

(c) if so, what strategy Government are working out to increase the volume of mobile phone subscribers in BSNL to offset the losses incurred by them by the surrender of landlines?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) No, Sir. The number of surrendered/disconnected landline phones of BSNL and MTNL during 2002-03 are as follows:

| Year | BSNL (Surrenders/Disconnections) | MTNL (Surrenders/Disconnections) |
|---|---|---|
| 2002-03 | 17,93,536 | 4,67,200 |

(b) Despite competition from private operators, there is a huge demand for BSNL mobile phones, generally all over the country. BSNL has a market share of 23% with more than 8.1 million cellular connections as on 30-11-2004.

(c) BSNL is further augmenting its cellular network by 12 million lines

during the year 2005 and introducing new value added services to capture a significant market share.

**Recurring Deposit Scheme in Post Offices through Agents**

1473. SHRI MURLI DEORA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether recurring deposit schemes are being implemented in the post offices through appointed agents;

(b) if so, the amount paid to agents annually, State-wise;

(c) whether post offices gain, if, the deposits are accepted directly by the post offices from the depositors and if so, the reasons for not adopting this procedure which was prevalent earlier; and

(d) whether pass-book is kept by agents and if so, the steps taken to ensure that poor and illiterate people are not cheated?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) The deposits in recurring deposit accounts can be made through an agent appointed by the State Government under "Mahila Pradhan Kshetriya Bachat Yojana" (MPKBY) and "Pay Roll Savings Groups Leaders" (PRSGL) scheme.

(b) The information regarding amount paid to agents annually State-wise is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

(c) Even at present a depositor can directly deposit in any savings schemes in the Post Offices. Hence, the practice of direct acceptance of deposits by the Post Offices from the depositors is in vogue. Agents also help in canvassing and securing investment for Post Office from small savers and educate housewives mainly in the habit of thrift.

(d) Yes, Sir. Mahila agents have to use serially numbered card in form ASLAAS-5, given in the Statement (*See* below). The agent will collect the pass-book and money from the depositor under receipt in the depositor's card, deposit the money in the post office within five to ten days from the date of its receipt from the depositor and return the pass-book to the depositor within ten days from its receipt back from the post office.